

[Tom Boone]

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[FOLK-STUFF-RANGELORE?] PHRASES & SAYINGS - DIALECT

Phipps, Woody

Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist #7 [75?]

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Tom Boone, 48, was born on his father's ranch in Coryell co., Tex. When not working on the ranch, his father's occupation was training wild horses to obey men and carry a saddle. His father's love of good horses and his desire that his sons should his ability as a horse trainer led him to teach them the horse training art. While Tom and his brothers became good horsemen, they were never able to duplicate their father's feats. Tom attended school at eight, and worked as a cowboy when not at school. At 10, Tom was allowed to go on trail drives to Waco, Tex. At 21, his father established a partnership ranch with him. This partnership was never dissolved until 1936, when Tom quit to come to Ft. Worth, Where he established a grocer store in Castleberry, a suburb of Ft. Worth. His story:

"Why, yes, I was born on the range. In fact, I like to of never got off of it. I was born on my dad's ranch in Coryell county, Texas, on April 6, 1889. Well, it was really dad's and my grand-dad's together, as grand-dad registered the brand in Milam county the first time it was ever registered. When Milam was cut up into several other counties, only to later be cut up more, which allowed Coryell county to come into being. That's all history and I guess every school kid knows about it. The reason I mentioned it in the first place was to

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explain where the brand was first registered, and why it wasn't registered in Coryell. You see, all ranches had different brands. That is, all the ranches in Texas, and each brand had to be registered at the Capitol and in it's county. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas

"Their brand was the Double Horseshoe. Connected. You made it like this: . They run from 4- To 500 to 1,500 head in this iron. What made the big difference was in dad being such [?] 2 good hand at buying and selling off stock. They didn't have such a big grazing pasture, but dad would do like I remember he done once. We bought up all the corn he needed to feed 1,000 extra steers at 20¢ a bushel, then bought up the rest at 15¢. The reason he bought the rest was because he figured on a little speculation. It seemed like he had corn stored in every barn in the country. The next thing he done, was to buy about 1,000 three year old steers, then fed 'em off during the winter. The next Spring, he had beef a-plenty to drive to Waco.

"Seems like I'm telling more about dad than I am myself, but I have to to tell mine because we were together so much. While Dad wasn't on the ranch, he worked for Billy Young, who owned the 'Upside down 22 Ranch.' The upside down 22 was his iron and made like this: . I reckon Billy Young run around 30,000 sheep, 1,000 head of cattle, and 1,200 horses on his place. My dad worked the horses, and that's really where he got his start in the ranching business. He come to Texas and settled near the Young Ranch in '88. He got his first job, that was the only job he ever had with another ranch besides his own, with Young as a horse buster. The first wages he drew were the same as the last.

"Mr. Young kept a lot of horses, and dad busted them for him. His wages were one out of three horses that he busted. He'd take these horses to his place after he'd busted them, then when he had a chance to sell, he'd sell and buy cattle. Grand-dad helped some by throwing in a little cash now and then. That was where the partnership come in. Grand-dad himself lived in the Navasota River Bottoms until he got too old to follow his trade, 3 which happened along about the time he got to losing money at it, he came up to live on the ranch. He had a real trade, and was his own boss. He freighted between the Navasota

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River Bottoms and the Rio Grande River Valley. My dad still has his tally book, where he put down each item he carried, the price, the name of his customer, and where he was located. In going over the tally book, I've seen articles in there you wouldn't believe. For instance, he hauled kerosene when it was still new. You couldn't buy it then unless you bought it in five gallon tins. Grand-dad bought it for 25¢ a gallon, hauled it to the Rio Grande, and sold it for 40¢ a gallon. He started hauling with oxen, but changed to horses during his last years at it.

“Now, back to dad. He was about the best horse buster in the country at the time. Young wouldn't hire anybody else but dad to do his horse busting, because dad was so good. Another thing, dad loved horses. Mr. Foote, who bought the old Hobin Ranch next to ours, bought the brand, land, and cattle, along with the buildings and all. You know, that's the way they used to do. When a fellow bought a ranch, he bought everything. Mr. Foote came to that country a young man, without a cent to his name. He worked for this rancher and that, not as a top hand cow puncher, but a handy man, and saved all the money he could. As he got a little money together, he'd sent it back home and his folks'd buy up some Onion Soldier land scrip from the ex-soldiers in their neighborhood, and Mr. Foote'd settle some more land. He never did get a very big ranch together, but he made a lot of money in fine cattle.

“For instance, he bought the first registered white face 4 bull ever to come to that part of the country, and maybe Texas. He run a lot of sheep, too. I don't know just now how many head he did run, but it was sizable. Later on, he married Billy Young's step-daughter. She inherited a little money, and run her own stock right in with Foote's. I don't recall her iron, but she had two-300 head of fine cattle, while he had four-500 head in the 'RH Connected 'iron. You make it like this: .

“Another interesting thing about Foote that only a few other people know, is that he tithes every cent he ever made to a separate bank account. He's a member of the Presbyterian Church, but he only gives his money to special things. For instance, he helps keep a

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Mexican mission going down on the border, gives to several orphan homes, and other good things. He's the kind of a man that gives [\$5.00?] to a special offering while in church, then comes around the next day and writes a check for a larger amount.

"I've heard Foote say several times that dad had lost a number of [25,000.00?] cattle deals just by stopping off on the road to look at some fine horses. I believe every word of it, too, because he really loved horses. After he broke 'em, he'd pet 'em 'til nobody else could do much with them. Along about the time I was eight years old, he gave me a horse that he'd busted himself. I named him 'Jud.'

"Jud was the finest cow horse I ever owned, and was about as good [a?] cutting horse as any in the country. The reason dad gave him to me was because I'd shown that I liked to work with the cattle, and he was a great believer in having a good horse to work with cattle. Of course, I couldn't work the herd like the top hands of that day could, but I did a lot of work when I wasn't 5 going to school. Since the school wasn't but a mile and a half away, I was able to get home early and work on the ranch. While I wanted to do that kind of work all the time, it never entered my mind not to go to school because I knew that dad wanted us kids to go. In fact, I was 21 before I knew that I could fail to do anything dad wanted me to do.

"I don't recall just how long I kept Jud, but he was sacrificed to the Spanish American Tracas racas, as was every other horse. the Government bought every horse it could, and paid the highest prices. I remember right now how that the prices on horses jumped from \$50.00 to \$100.00 as soon's all the available horses were bought up. Right away, dad hired two extra horse busters, and bought every wild horse he couldn't catch in the hills, 'til he had them all bought up. While he was buying, he and the other men were working as long as they had daylight, busting horses and delivering them. Sometimes, the inspector would come to our house, other times he was at other ranches and we'd take out herd over to him. Then they had a horse that wasn't fully broke, and might pitch a little, they'd have me ride him 'til the inspector seen him because they figured that the inspector would

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take any horse a nine year old kid could ride. That was where dad slipped up on him a little because I could ride good then.

“While the horse busting was going on, dad depended on us boys to take care of the cattle, except when he got a contract from the Waco beef contractors. When he'd have us stage a roundup, and he'd pick the sale critters out. What was the only time he'd get away from the horse work, was when we made a drive to Waco. 6 >I guess I was pretty close to 10 when I made my first trail drive to Waco. While I might forget the exact date, I'll never forget the first day because that was when I say my first street car, and the first time my horse had ever seen one.

“Dad and I had parked the herd in a pastured outside town while he went in to meet his contractor. After awhile, I decided to go in for just a short while, and look things over. I wasn't so far from the business district, and was riding my horse across the car tracks near a curve, when a car came thundering around that [car?]. Well, my horse went to pitching just as hard as he could, and while trying to bring him under control, that car kept a-coming. You know, I didn't know they could make them things stop like they could, and there it was, coming at me as hard as it looked like it could come. Right when I was about ready to quit the horse, the motorman put on the brakes and stopped a few feet away. The horse then broke and run. There were a bunch of men on the car, and as we went away, I could hear them laughing. I got the horse stopped about a half a mile from where the herd was parked, so I went on over and waited for dad.

“My next trail drive turned out to be an exciting one for me. Dad parked the herd in the same place, then went on in. This happened Saturday evening, and we were going to have to lay over 'til Monday. About an hour after dad went in, here come three girls on a little old mule. They come on out to the herd, then come over to me. What a fit them girls gave me. They hugged me, kissed me, and just gave me a devil of a time 'til I got to where I could hit their mule with my hat. They chased him, caught him, then rode off toward town, laughing as hard as they could. 7 “When dad came back from town, I never told him what

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had happened. He told me to come on and go with him because he'd made arrangements for our room in town. Right on the outskirts, we turned into a place. We put our horses up in the stable, then started toward the house. Do you know, one of them darn girls was there, and the other two, who were out of sight, had made plans to spend the night there. Well, I hung back, and dad told me to come on. When he seen me keep a-hanging back, he asked me what the trouble was. When I told him, he gave me three half dollars, and told me to offer them money for kisses. Well, I done that as soon's I got a chance, and do you know, it worked like a charm. I believe the gals hated me after that, because I offered them money. Boy, I'd hate to offer one money now. She'd sure be hard to get rid of, wouldn't she[?] But that was the way the women were of old.

“Along about the time the railroads got to going good, and the market here in Forth Worth got to going good, we took another herd to Waco. The way dad got his contracts, the contractors'd send him a letter, telling him how many head they wanted, and at what price. Well, if man got into Waco at a time when the market was glutted with beef, he didn't get such a good price. Dad never had much trouble like that because he wouldn't make a drive unless he figured he could get rid of his stuff reasonable anyway. This time though, the market was glutted.

“On the way down, a man met the herd with one of the finest cows we'd ever seen then, and wanted to sell it because he needed the money. Dad bought it at a good price, figuring on selling it as soon's he reached Waco. Well, the contractor told dad that he had all the beef he wanted, but he'd buy all the beef 8 that came up to the contract. We drove the herd up and into one pen, and as we'd cut out a critter and drive it up to the gate, he'd either wave it into the pen where he'd keep the beef, or, he'd wave it outside the gate where we'd drive them back home. Well, I could tell by the way dad was acting, that he didn't like the way things were going, but we went ahead. The man cut and cut, and he really turned down some fine cattle. He must have had all he intended to buy when we

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came to the cow dad bought, because he turned her down. Dad says, 'What're you turning that one down for?'

"The contractor answered, 'Oh, just on general principles.,'

"After the last cow had been cut out, dad gave us boys the order to take the cattle out of that pen and put them with the rest of the herd. We didn't hesitate but jumped right to work. The contractor says, 'What're you doing that for?'

"Dad says, 'Oh, just on general principles.' From that time on, we never sold any beef we didn't send right into Fort Worth to the stock yards. or somewhere else.

"I'd like to have you meet my dad. He sure was one more bronc buster in his day, and he can still ride today. Of course, he couldn't ride the outlaws he once did, but you couldn't tell him that. We used to say that anything he had to hold onto to ride, he couldn't ride a-tall. He could sure ride 'em slick.

"Now, about the trick riding, we didn't have it down to such a fine hair as they do today in the rodeos. I believe we had worse horse horses , alright, but the rodeo hands of today really have the trick riding down right. If the old time cow hands knew what they do today, they'd have rode much better because they were just 9 better cow hands. When their hats blew off, they'd make a turn, ride back and get it off the ground without ever stooping, and be on their way. Today, when a rodeo hand does that, he does it in such a way that it looks like he was the kingpin rider of all time.

"Another thing. These modern saddles. You can put a fortune in them now, but when I was a kid, they didn't have that down so good either. My first saddle, dad made me earn it working for it. I picked cotton for one of his neighbors, and just about the time when I was supposed to have made enough money to pay for that saddle, he was in Waco in business. He bought the saddle, and had it sent out to me. It was delivered on the evening

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I got my \$8.00, which was just the price of the saddle, and I paid for it. I thought that saddle was the prettiest in the world.

“The other drives I went on, were to places like the drive we made to Morgan. We HAD A hard time on that trip with stomps. We were taking 325 head of four year old steers to Morgan, and when we got to old man Park's stock farm, we parked them in a big pasture which was about three miles from his house, and had a big round hill right in the middle of it. We went in, ate, sat around and talked, then went to bed. Along in the early morning hours about three, a roar woke me up. When I got up, dad was already dressing. He said it was down in that pasture, and we hurried on out the stable, saddled our horses, and rode out.

“Sure enough, they were stampeding, and we met the herd just right to turn 'em around that hill. Well, sir, you never had a handier thing in your life than that hill was that time. They just milled around the hill 'til they got tired and stopped. 10 “The weather had been awful dry about this time, and that made the herd skittish to start with. When, after any stomp, the herd'll naturally be skittish so we were on our toes for another stomp. When we got about two miles from the Bosque, the herd scented the water and broke for it. They ran that two miles as hard as they could run, then instead of waiting and going down the trial, they jumped an eight foot bank. Of course, a lot of them were hurt, and I think we lost about 20 of them.

“After we got that snarl straightened out, we got started again the next morning. A few miles out from Morgan, we had to cross a train track, and when we had about [10?] percent of the herd over, here come a passenger train. The herd stampeded toward morgan, and when the got to the city limits, divided up into small bunches in order to go down the streets. That broke the stomp when they got separated. We rounded the herd up again on the other side of town, and Sam Wilson, who'd ordered the steers, took it over.

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“Well, we'd been over a day and a night without food by the time we got back to meridian. While that was a part of a cow poke's job, we were still hungry as wolves. We stopped in a boarding house, one of those eat as long as you want to, you know, and started into eating. Along after we'd been eating a while, the waiter passed the cake. Old Sam Griggsby reared back and said, 'My God, man! We wont be ready for cake for an hour yet!', and we really weren't. We sure didn't do anything but break even when we paid him double for the meal.

“Old Sam was a pretty good rider, but about the best around besides dad was a nearby rancher by the name of Wallace. He run around 5-600 head in the '[RO?] iron. You make the brand like this: